



# SAY WHAT?!?

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR  
UNCOMFORTABLE CONVERSATIONS

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# OUR AGENDA

1 INTRODUCTIONS

2 WHY ANSWER

3 TYPES OF QUESTIONS

4 HOW TO RESPOND

5 RELIABLE RESOURCES

6 QUESTIONS?

# OBJECTIVES

**BY THE END OF THIS WORKSHOP WE WILL**

-  **IDENTIFY THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF QUESTIONS YOUTH ASK ABOUT SEXUAL HEALTH**
-  **DEVELOP STRATEGIES FOR ANSWERING EACH TYPE**
-  **REFER TO RELIABLE RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE SEXUALITY AND SEXUAL HEALTH INFORMATION**

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- BA – Human Services Advocacy
- MEd – Human Sexuality

Specialized in:

- IDD considerate sexuality education
- Curriculum Development
- Violence Prevention Education
- Medically-accurate, culturally-inclusive, pleasure-informed Sexuality Education



How do you know when to ask someone out on a date/telling them you love them. Like persay that you've known the person for a while and your both to shy to ~~each~~<sup>tell</sup> each other that you like the other person, ~~what to do~~ And your parents are putting pressure on you to ask them out. What do you do?

WITH DON'T WE  
ANSWER  
QUESTIONS?

A photograph of a rugged mountain peak, likely snow-capped, set against a clear blue sky. A white circle is superimposed over the mountain, and the text "WHY ANSWER?" is written in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters across the center of the circle. The overall image has a light blue and purple gradient overlay.

**WHY ANSWER?**

## Youth are likely engaging in the behaviors they ask about

The 2015 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System shows that 43.2% of male students and 39.2% of female high school students have engaged in sexual intercourse. In 9<sup>th</sup> grade, 24.1% of students have engaged in sexual intercourse. By senior year, that number jumps to 58.1% (CDC.gov)

## Accurate Information = Better Health

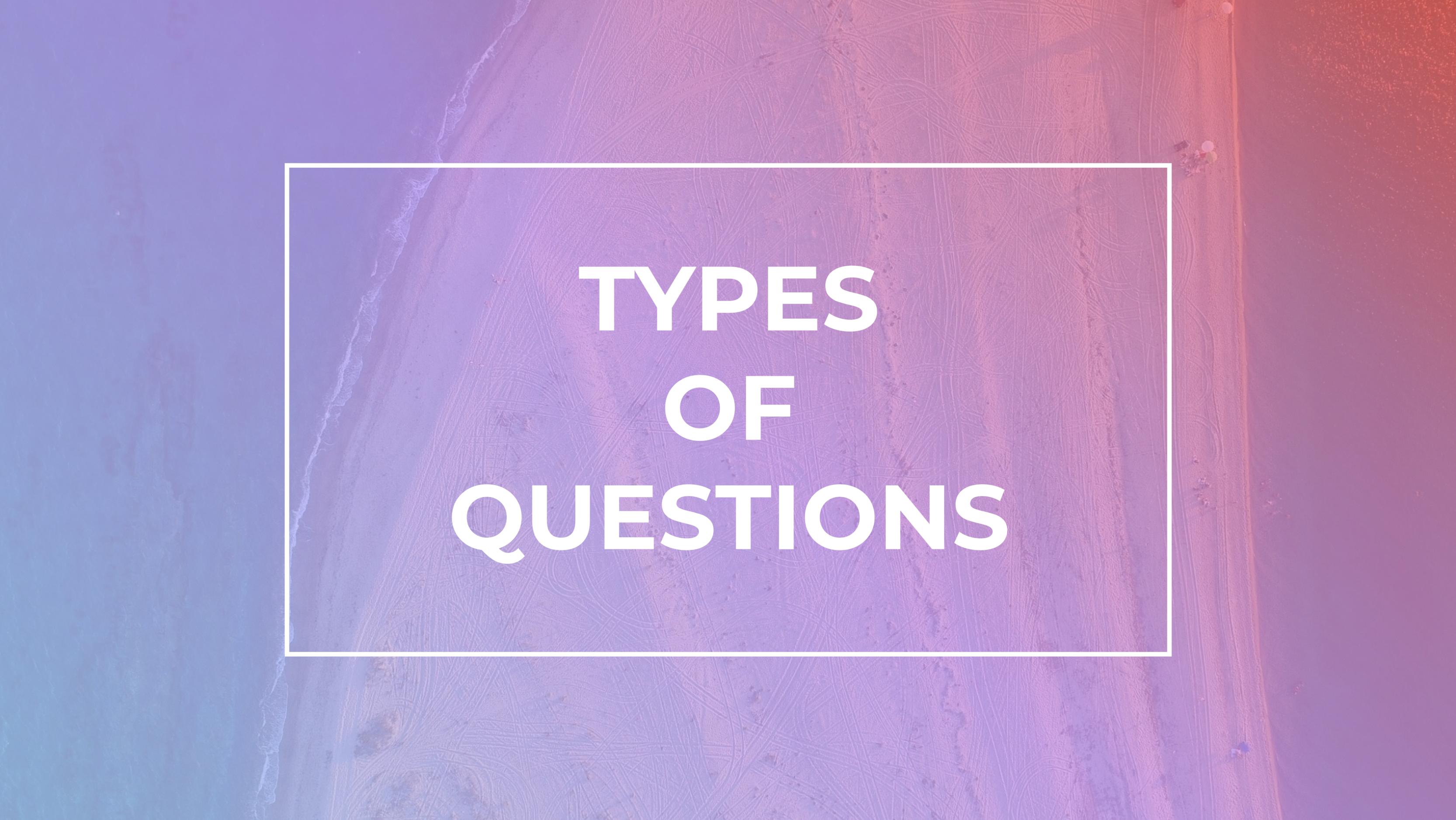
In comparing abstinence-only programs with comprehensive sex education, comprehensive sex education was associated with a 50% lower risk of teen pregnancy. (Kohler, et al., 2008 via SEICUS.org)

## Information is relevant to the group.

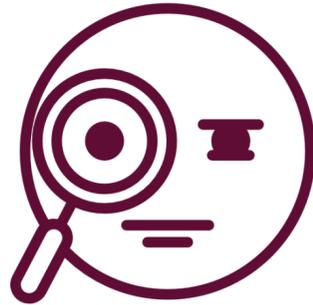
In their analysis of anonymous questions, Angulo-Olaiz et. al. found that, “a notable mix was found of questions implying exposure to or awareness of a wide range of sexual activities, together with questions demonstrating fundamental misunderstandings or confusion about some of the most basic aspects of sex and sexuality” (2014). They concluded that analysis of the cards showed the imperative to address the concerns of the specific audience when delivering sexuality education.

**It's our Responsibility—Not just our JOB.**

this might sound  
strange but what  
about kinks?

An aerial photograph of a beach with a white rectangular frame overlaid in the center. The frame contains the text 'TYPES OF QUESTIONS' in white, bold, uppercase letters. The background shows the ocean on the left and the sandy beach on the right, with some faint tracks or patterns in the sand.

# TYPES OF QUESTIONS



**Information Seeking**



**Permission Seeking**



**“Am I Normal?”**

# TYPES OF QUESTIONS



**Shock Value**



**Personal Information**



**Truly Terrifying**

# Information Seeking

Information Seeking Questions are requests for knowledge or skills. They tend to have straight-forward answers, can be easily backed up with data, or teach a concrete skill.

Students may not have the right language to ask these questions. Model better language in your answer.

“  
How does being  
high affect your  
decisions?  
”

“  
What are some  
different  
sexualities?  
”

“  
Is sexual activity the  
only way to  
give/receive an STD  
or STI?  
”

“  
What is a  
Slut?  
”

“  
Does a trans man  
get their period?  
”

“  
If a condom feels more  
tight, does that mean it's a  
perfect fit or easier to  
pop?  
”

“  
What is a  
sh\*m\*le?  
”

“  
Can a guy get  
pregnant?  
”

“  
Can you get  
pregnant by sperm  
on a toilet seat?  
”

# Permission Seeking

Permission Seeking Questions are looking for you to weigh in on a values-based topic. You can give the facts of the issue at hand or present the differing sides

You can also take an opportunity to let students know who in their lives may have answers to those questions.

“  
Is it ok to  
suck dick?  
”

“  
Are we too young to  
have sex?  
”

“  
When is a good age  
to start dating?  
”

“  
What do I say if a girl  
asked me to her house  
if she sent a winky face  
and a smiley face?  
”

“  
Me and my best friend  
don't have any  
boundaries. Is this ok?  
”

“  
Is not letting your girlfriend  
go hang out with friends even  
if they are guys okay?  
”

“  
How do I say I'm  
a Lesbian?  
”

“  
Is it okay to be  
transgender?  
”

“  
Would it be okay to  
have a boyfriend at  
this age?  
”

“  
Why do I always get  
my heart broken?  
”

“  
Is it unhealthy to be  
okay with being sexual  
quickly?  
”

“  
Is consent always  
needed in a trusting  
relationship?  
”

“  
Why do people get  
so freaked out at  
my sexuality?  
”

“  
Why don't I get wet  
even if I'm really  
turned on?  
”

“  
What if you are bisexual  
and you are not sure which  
gender you want to get  
into a relationship with?  
”

“  
Is it okay if  
I'm gay?  
”

“  
Why is my penis  
hard when I see a  
hot girl or lady?  
”

“  
Do straight men  
actually like things  
in their butts?  
”

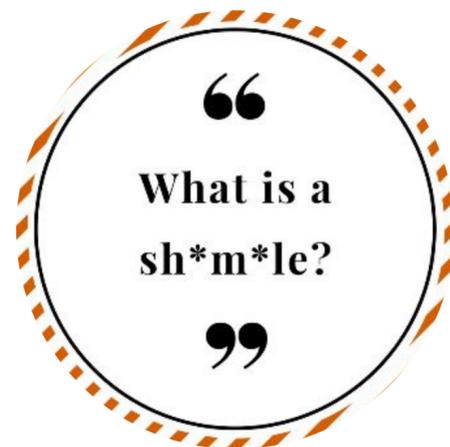
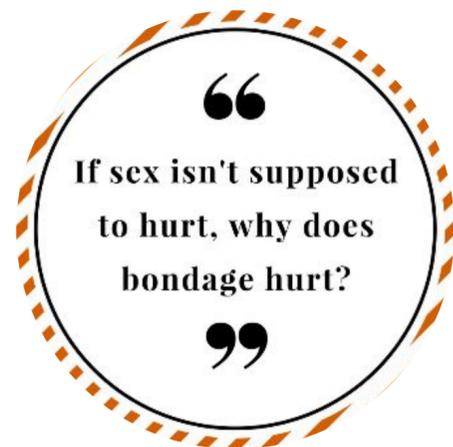
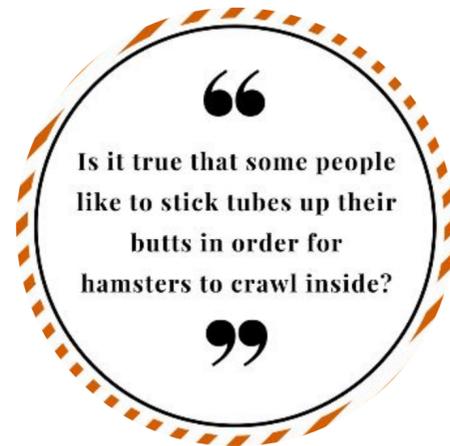
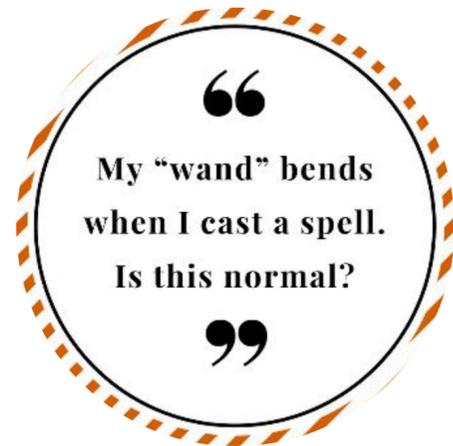
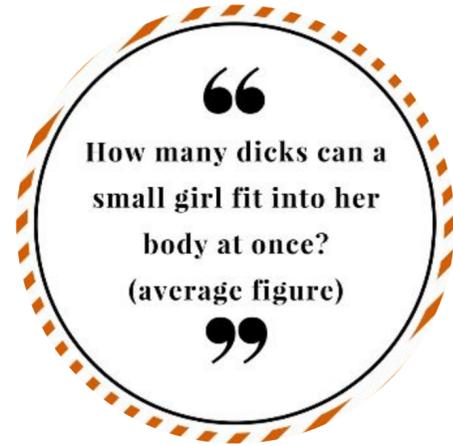
# “Am I Normal?”

The “Am I Normal” Questions are seeking validation. It is important to normalize a wide variety of experiences through your answer. You never know who is in the room.

# Shock Value

Students ask Shock Value questions for many reasons. Maybe they are trying to break the tension in a room, maybe they are trying to get a rise out of you.

Many times, shock value questions are really Permission Seeking or Am I Normal? Questions in disguise.



# Personal Questions

**S**

Personal Questions may be the result of curiosity, but it is more likely they are about validation and permission. Rather than answering about yourself, talk about universal experiences or statistical norms.

You can also issue the blanket statement that you aren't comfortable answering personal questions. You are the expert in the room and what you say matters.

“  
Do you think boys  
are more pushy  
than girls?  
”

“  
When did you  
lose your  
virginity?  
”

“  
How many people have  
you had sex with?  
”

“  
Are you a  
transgender?  
”

“  
Do you  
Masturbate?  
”

“  
Do you think it's  
better to be  
circumcised or not?  
”

“  
What kind of  
birth control do  
you think is best?  
”

“  
Have you  
ever...?  
”

“  
Do you  
watch porn?  
”

# Truly Terrifying Questions

These are the questions that make your stomach drop.

They are the kinds of questions that show someone really needs help. If these questions come from an anonymous questions box, tell someone from the community setting. They will likely have more context and can follow up.

“  
I cut Myself.  
I want to die!  
But I want to stop, how can I ?  
”

“  
If someone heard something  
about and made it a rumor,  
but it was true and completely  
private, how do you solve it?  
”

“  
What do I do if even when I'm  
surrounded by people I still  
feel lonely and worthless?  
”

“  
Is it considered rape for  
like a 26 year old and a  
16 year old to date?  
”

“  
What do you do if two  
girls are trying to force  
you into sex?  
”

“  
I'm scared of others  
being grossed out by  
my body- how do I get  
over this?  
”

“  
How do you stop  
someone who  
physically abuses you?  
”

“  
Why do girls  
send nudes?  
”

“  
Should you warn  
the abuser's next  
partner/victim?  
”



# HOW TO RESPOND

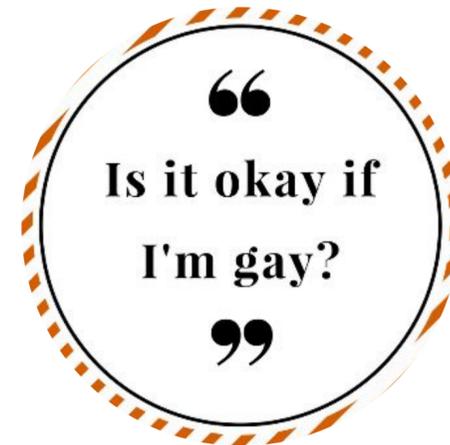
# STRATEGIC STEPS



## Identify the Type

Looking at the type of question gives us hints on how to answer.

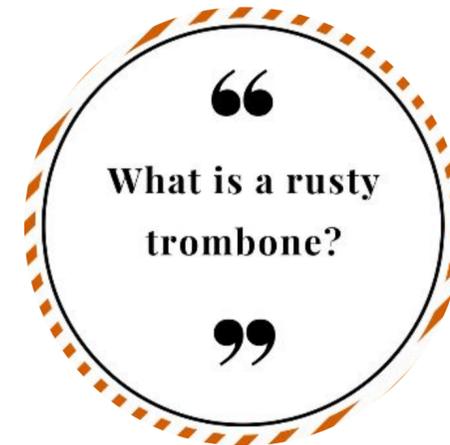
Are **SHOCK VALUE** or **Personal Questions** hiding another type of question?



## What information can you give?

Do you have time for a longer conversation that addresses affective (feelings) learning? Do you have another chance to dive into the topic?

Can you only give facts and resources right now?

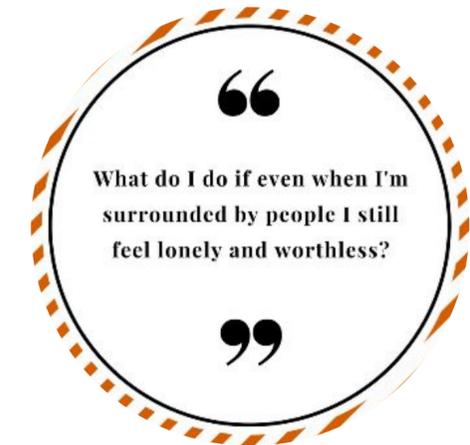


## Deliver Factually

Don't pontificate. Don't add in your opinions. Give the best information you can with the facts you have.

Don't be afraid to say, "I don't know. Let me get back to you."

And then get back to them.



## Research or Refer

If you didn't have an answer, research it so you have the answer next time.

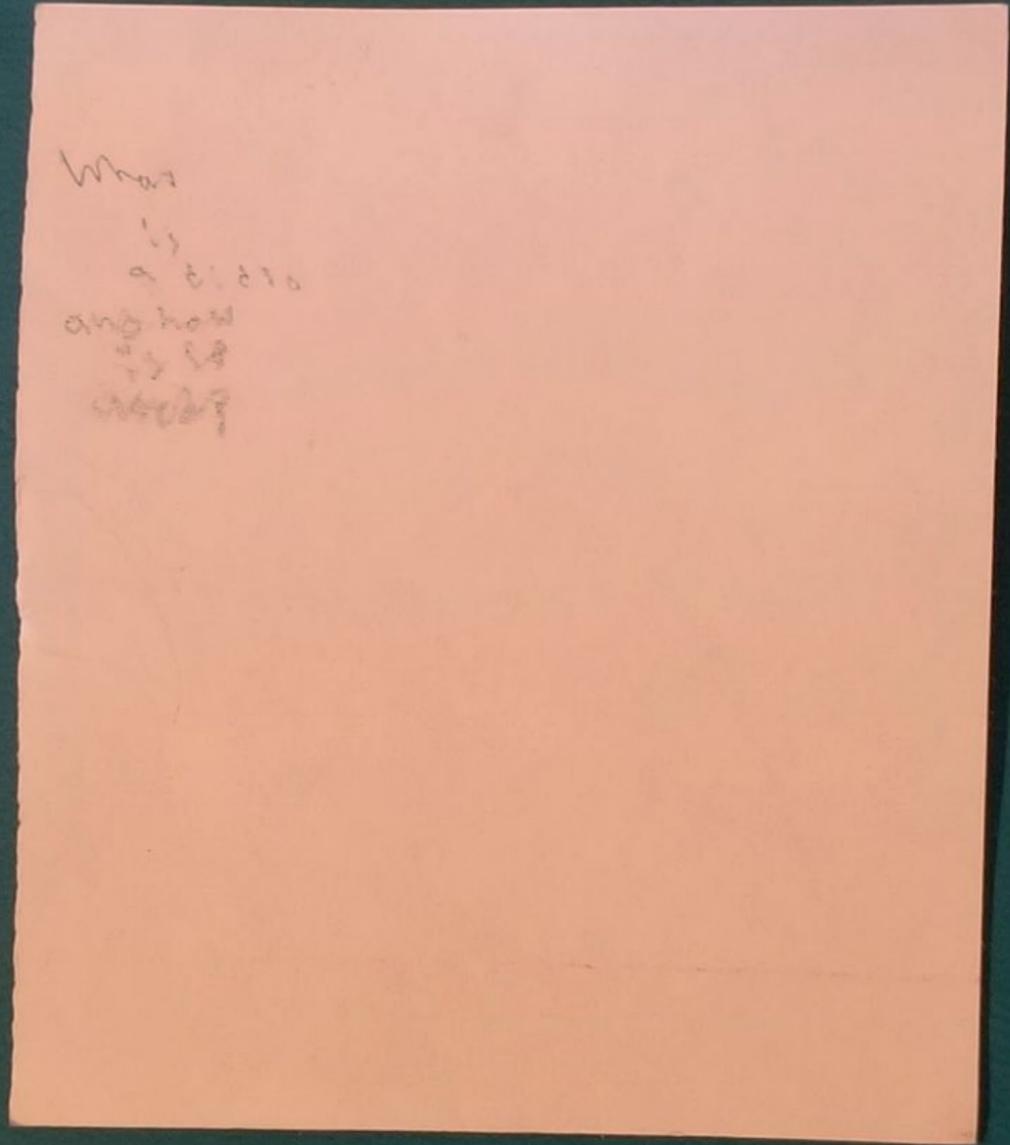
If the question is out of your depths (or ethical guidelines), know who to talk to in the school or community.

“

**What is a dildo  
and how is it  
used?**

”

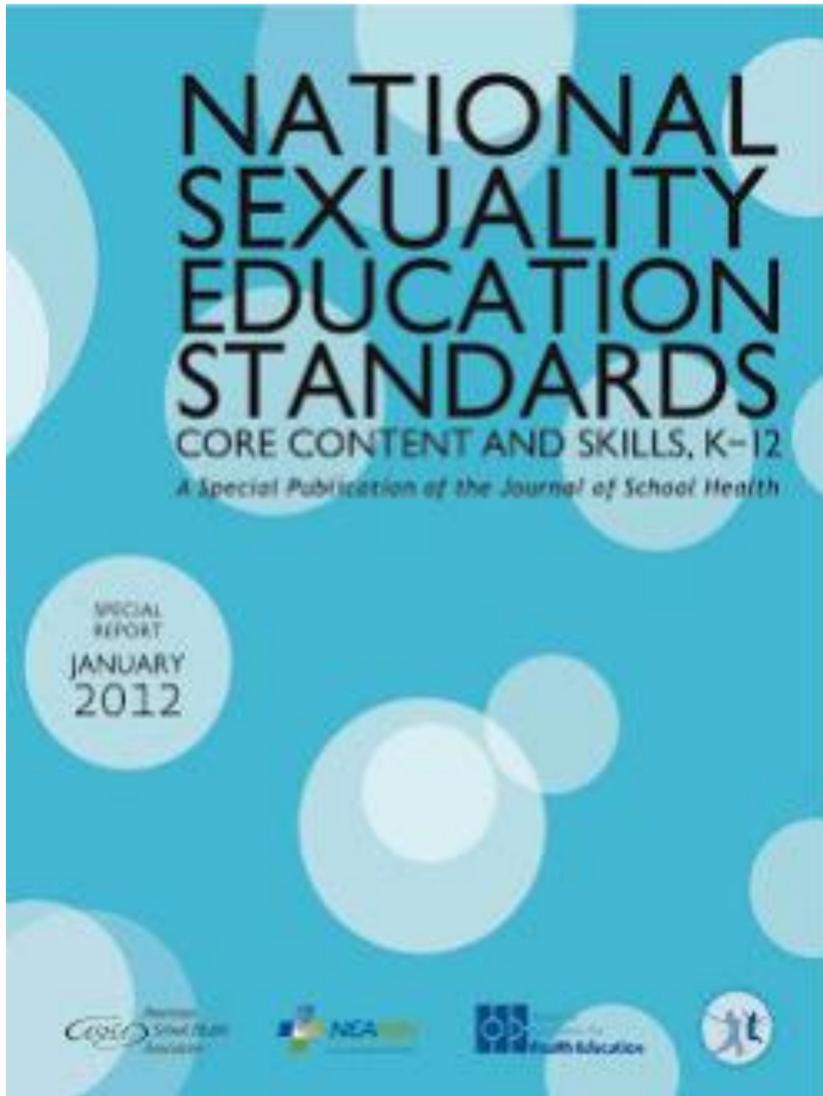
**WHAT KIND  
OF  
QUESTION  
IS THIS?**



**DOES THIS  
IMAGE  
CHANGE YOUR  
ANSWER?**

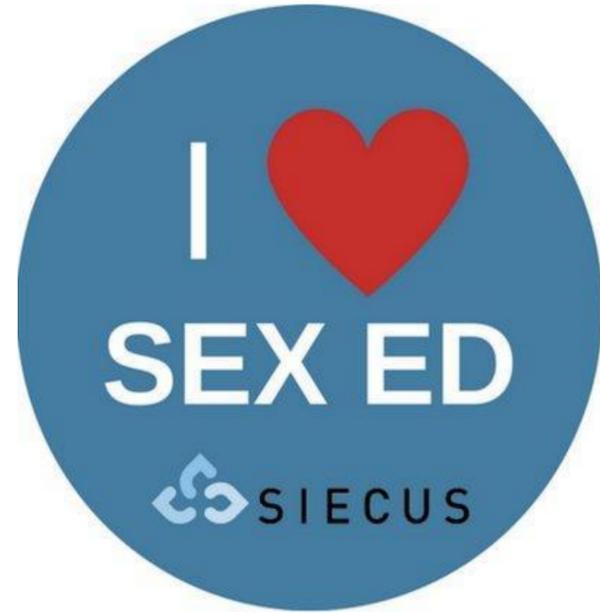


**RELIABLE  
RESOURCES**



**answer**  
sex ed, honestly

 **Advocates  
for Youth**  
Rights. Respect. Responsibility.®

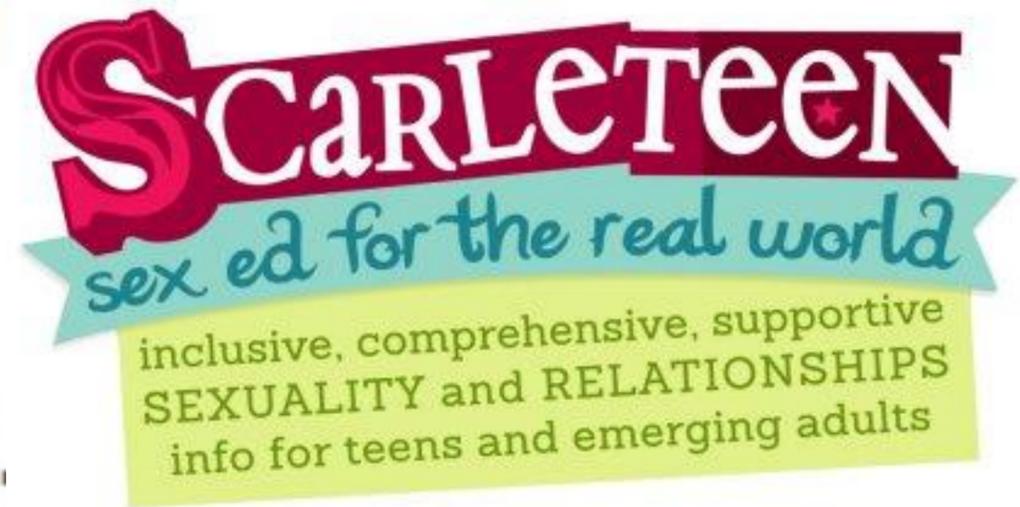


★ *I support* ★

**Planned  
Parenthood**®  
Care. No matter what.



**FoSE**  
Future of Sex Education



A person is shown from a high angle, sitting at a desk and using a laptop. The person's hands are on the keyboard and trackpad. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent purple color. In the center, the word "QUESTIONS?" is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font. To the left of the text, there is a white square outline that is partially open on the top and bottom sides.

**QUESTIONS?**

# CITATIONS

Angulo-Olaiz, F. Goldfarb, E.S. Constantine, N. (2014) Sexuality Information Needs of Latino and African American Ninth Graders: A Content Analysis of Anonymous Questions, *American Journal of Sexuality Education*, 9:1, 21-40, DOI: [10.1080/15546128.2014.883266](https://doi.org/10.1080/15546128.2014.883266)

Pamela Kohler, et al., “Abstinence-Only and Comprehensive Sex Education and the Initiation of Sexual Activity and Teen Pregnancy,” *Journal of Adolescent Health* 42.4 (March 2008); 344–351.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2015. Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data. Available at: [www.cdc.gov/yrbs](http://www.cdc.gov/yrbs). Accessed on 5/12/2018.